

**Alabama Child Death Review System
State Team Meeting Minutes
November 16, 2006**

State Team Members Present:

Robert Brissie (VIANET-Birmingham)
Gerone Grant
Steve Lafreniere
Michael Sparks
Don Williamson (Proxy – Bob Hinds)
Shirley Scanlan
Ken Snell
Hoyt Childs
Beverly Jordan (VIANET-Troy)
Tara Kyser
Cheryl Outland
Jay Wolf

Absent:

Jean Brown
Frank DeGraffenried
Gerald Dial
Bill English
Steve Giddens
Randy Thomas
Olga White
James Hayes
Tara Johnson
Jim Grigg
Larry Means
Mike Millican
J. R. Sample
Linda Tilly
Beth Twitty
Bobby Timmons

Guests/Staff Present:

Bob Hinds
Tirrell Martin
Tarina Moores
Dianne Sims
Chris Haag
Melody Jones
Albert Woolbright
Nancy Wright

Call to Order

On November 16, 2006 at 1:00 PM on the campus of Auburn University at Montgomery, Alabama, the Alabama Child Death Review System (ACDRS) State Team meeting was called to order. Mr. Bob Hinds called the meeting to order and welcomed new members and guests.

New Members and Guests

Present for their first meeting were new members: Dr. Beverly Jordan (via VIANET-Troy), Mr. Michael Sparks and Dr. Ken Snell.

Invited guests in attendance were: Chris Haag, Melody Jones, Dianne Sims, Albert Woolbright and Nancy Wright.

New Staff member Tirrell Martin, ACDRS Assistant Director, was present for his first meeting.

Guest Speaker

Melody Jones, Alabama Gift of Life (GOL) Foundation, delivered a presentation which detailed the current status of our “Alabama Cribs for Kids” program. Our “pilot” program has placed over 80 new portable cribs since the program inception in August 2005. This figure has more than proven the value of the program and therefore we are taking steps to expand its reach to other Alabama counties.

Ms. Jones provided the details of our planned expansion into Elmore, Autauga, Bullock, Lowndes, Crenshaw, Butler, Pike, Tallapoosa, Talladega and Escambia counties. This will increase our cribs placement from an average of 8 cribs a month to approximately 28 cribs per month. Additional funding sources have been identified by the GOL which will make this expansion possible.

Unfinished Business:

Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes for the February 2006, May 2006, and August 2006 meetings could not be approved because there was not a quorum present.

State Team Membership Update

After introducing the new State Team members who were in attendance for the first time, Mr. Hinds announced that all positions are currently filled. However he announced that as of today's meeting three Governor appointees will have completed their first terms in office. The Governor will be asked to fill those positions as soon as possible.

Status of Cases Report/Comparison

Mr. Hinds reported that as of this month the ACDRS has achieved the enviable goal of 100% Team formation for the entire State. This means that every Judicial Circuit in Alabama has formed a CDR Team and that every child in our State is now represented by a Local Team. Few, if any, other states can claim such a record. And further he reported that we were just 25 cases away from reviewing 100% of the cases eligible for review for our next annual report year (2004). Our Local Teams reviewed 89% of all eligible cases in CY 2003, which was our previous all-time record. But we are on the threshold of achieving something very special...100% participation and 100% review rate. No other state can match that record! We are working hard to achieve this goal.

Status of the CY 2003 CDR Annual Report

Mr. Hinds reported that the CY 2003 CDR Annual Report has been published on the web site and in hard copy. A press release went out to provide information on the publication. Mr. Hinds believes this is our best report yet and is particularly proud of the articles provided by several of our members.

2006 ACDRS Training Conference Update

Mr. Hinds provided a summary of the events included in the 2006 ACDRS Training Conference. Conference evaluations proved that the conference was a resounding success...from every aspect. The guest speakers were well received as was the total conference content. Facilities were excellent and attendance figures were much higher than for our previous conference in 2004. Attendees let it be known that they would like to return to the same location for the 2008 conference.

New Business:

ACDRS Budget Issues

Mr. Hinds gave a brief overview of the ACDRS FY 2007 budget situation. As mentioned at the August 2006 meeting and referenced in the meeting minutes the FY 2006 ACDRS budget receive a dramatic, mid-year hit. The Alabama State Legislature took a large part of the budget by transferring Children First Trust Fund dollars into the Alabama General Fund. The large tobacco companies also contributed to the problem by attempting to renege on their financial responsibilities through a "loop hole" in the national tobacco settlement provisions. In short because of these problems the ACDRS lost 60% (approximately \$170,000) of our planned budget for FY 2006!

The only good news in this is that the Children First Foundation staff had been forecasting a pending "dip" in tobacco revenues. They had been warning us to expect this "dip" to last for 5-7 years beginning in FY 2003. We paid attention to their warnings and had been holding out a portion of our annual budget to use to supplement our annual Children first budget amounts. Delays in the expected "dip" helped the situation by allowing us to build a bigger pad than we thought we would need.

When this sudden lost of revenue came we were prepared. However, instead of an expected \$40-70K reduction we were hit with an almost \$170K reduction. But we were prepared and although the reduction was larger than forecast, we were able to absorb it with little consequences...other than a more rapid than expected depletion of our reserves. We are still in a healthy situation for FY 2007 and FY 2008. Hopefully by the end of FY 2008 the expected "dip" will have run its course.

ACDRS Assistant Director Vacancy

The ACDRS Assistant Director position unexpectedly became vacant when our new employee left the program for another position. Fortunately, we were able to fill the position very quickly with a very capable young man fresh out of Auburn University. Tirrell Martin has been hired and officially started work on November 20, 2006.

Booster Seat Advocacy Program

As announced at our previous meeting, the ACDRS is in the process of forming a partnership with the Southeast Regional Child Safety Institute, VOICES for Alabama's Children, the ADPH Injury Prevention Division and possibly other private businesses/organizations to implement a Booster Seat Advocacy Program. The purpose of the program will be to highlight the new Child Safety Restraint Law and provide training on how to properly use a required booster seat. The new Alabama law is a step in the right direction but it is essentially inadequate protection for our children. This new partnership is an effort to expand the message provided in the new law.

Ten sites are being located around the state to provide training and education on this very important topic. These sites will be located in close proximity to ACDRS Teams in order for Local Teams to provide assistance to the site plus a small supply of booster seats.

SUIDI Academy/ACDRS Child Death Investigator Course Update

In September of 2006 three members of the ACDRS State Team were invited to attend a CDC sponsored training academy in Atlanta (CDC) to participate in a "train-the-trainer" conference dedicated to providing standardized Infant/Child Death Investigation Techniques. Training academies such as this one are being conducted across the country in hopes of improving the quality of infant/child death investigations.

In addition to this academy, the ACDRS is continuing to send selected Alabama law enforcement investigators to Department of Justice (DOJ) training courses also dealing with the subject of Infant /Child Death Investigations. In January 2007 graduates of the CDC Academy and DOJ course will meet to provide inputs for our existing Alabama Infant/Child Death Investigators Course. The course is an ever changing instrument that seeks to improve the quality of our child death investigations.

SIDS Research News

Recently a new study was published that indicates that there may be a scientific way to predict which children might be particularly at risk of dying from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). The study was preliminary in nature and very small in scope...but it offers the first real signs that there may be a way to actually predict the possibility of SIDS with any degree of certainty. We will monitor this study and any follow up research for possible newsworthy results.

Open Discussion:

The State Team suggested that we look into the possibility of partnering with the Alabama High School Athletic Association in some sort of campaign to reduce sports injuries and deaths in Alabama. Dr. Beverly Jordan is interested in becoming involved with this effort.

In addition we are going to look into initiating new public awareness campaigns, in partnership with the ADPH/Injury Prevention Division, on the subjects of: the Alabama Safe Haven Law and the Graduated Driver's License Law.

Executive Session:

Without objection the Team agreed to move to Executive Session. Upon completing discussions on several topics the team agreed to return to Open Session.

Next Meeting Scheduled

Our next regularly scheduled ACDRS State Team meeting is tentatively scheduled for February 22, 2007. Location and time TBD.

Adjournment

There being no further items on the agenda and no further discussion requested, without objection, the meeting was adjourned at 3:00 P.M.

RH: tm